

REWRITE



The Magazine of Effective Writing

Vol. XII No. 10.

OCTOBER, 1952.

Twenty-five cents

YOU NEED A CREATIVE OUTLET

A few days ago I was talking with an old-time machinist and a man in charge of other men in the production of heavy metal industrial machines. They were discussing the impossibility in this age of specialization of finding men who can understand the meaning & full scope of their machines and shops. Ask a man, they said, to do something a little out of the ordinary and you find he doesn't know how. And many of them haven't the initiative & natural ingenuity. They have been trained, & urged by their unions, to do one job well. A small unit of work, my executive friend informed us, recently was broken down into 35 separate "push button" machine operations. A girl without too much understanding of tool operation could handle most of them.

"Lots of these workers don't want responsibility. They are content to do their task for a lifetime. (Because without the appreciation of what it's all about, they cannot obtain advancement.) But I think that's one of the troubles with a lot of labor today. A man or woman who doesn't get any feeling of creative satisfaction out of his job, sooner or later develops an unconscious sense of frustration." A practical businessman's view!

I could not help thinking that there is a lesson for writers in this stimulating talk we had. Many writers approach their professional job in much the same spirit as these limited apprentices. Through years of getting too many rejections slips, or a special need for making money, they build up a respect only for the writer who makes a lot of "dough" from his "racket". Writing becomes a business, not an art or a high profession. A writer loses the overall perspective in trying too hard on the special level.

The first thing every writer should think through is why he is writing. And whether he is writing for money or for fun, he ought to remember his customer, the ultimate reader. For without him a writer's writing can have no raison d'être. No reason for being. It's a two-sided bargain. Too many writers, particularly those in the smaller, less important fields, tend not to look at their jobs with sufficient respect. Experienced editors realize that the printed word has a "magic" appeal. Somewhere there is at least a single reader for almost anything that can be written. Even the most insincere drivel is likely to "make sense" for someone with limited intelligence or perspective.

Therefore, no matter how minor your message may appear to you, if it widens the horizon or enlarges the experience of some other soul on this earth, it has not been done in vain. And you must constantly remember a sad truth: namely, that none of us live the best we are capable of every day. We have our high points and our low ones. Perhaps, too, the world had not been good to us this

day, as it may be tomorrow. So what we might reject yesterday, will hit us hard today. A writer no matter how good a student of human nature he may be, or how clever he is in lining up a particular piece for a special audience, he can never guess entirely correctly what the total reaction to his effort will be. There will always be individual explosions he never could possibly have imagined would occur.

Therefore, to repeat, if you touch anyone anywhere any time, be it today or a hundred years from now, you have written a ms. that was worthwhile. It matters little that your effort was printed in a big circulation magazine, a literary quarterly, or a humble experimental publication, or even the letters column in your small local paper. There is no monopoly on quality or success. A piece is good in kind and as it fulfills a useful purpose. Lincoln's Gettysburg Address & his letter to the mother who had lost too many of her sons in the War, are equally memorable, because they were not only written in suitable manner, but also in the language of the human heart.

I have talked so far mainly of the reader. But the effect of composition on the author is no less important. For writing is a form of creative living. And where in the hands, let us say, of one person it is sterile and a perfunctory means of expression, in another's it becomes vibrant and glowing. Imagination is required for writing as for living. But it can be a satisfying hobby or vocation.

Most of all, it is a challenge. A law of life, as my friend so wisely intimated, has always been, and probably always will be, that each of us must find our creative outlet or expect to be destroyed. Many persons through obstinacy, vanity or just downright lack of good judgment, destroy themselves by trying to express themselves in a way or through a medium not suitable to their natural talents. Part of the task of living is to discover in which direction God wishes us to be fruitful. But within certain limitations, if one gives of himself unstintedly and unselfishly, he'll be rewarded. The first order of the day is to create, not endlessly prepare, or seek one's most flattering ivory tower.

Let no one forget, however, that writing, like other forms of self-expression, is a two-edged sword. It will cut as easily him, who holds it, and misuses it, as the infidels against whom it may be turned. Good writing is serious business. It may not be picked up lightly, nor tossed off perfunctorily. If it does not mean enough to you, for heaven's sake turn your back on it before it's too late. If on the other hand it will not let you "forget" it, mind your portents and do it well. The world is full of men and women who hate their jobs and only follow them to buy some material security. These folk need faith in God and a truly creative outlet.

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Published Monthly by
Writers' Counsel Service, 50 West Street,
Lunenburg, Mass.

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THERE IS MORE THAN AN ELECTION AT STAKE

So far as **REWRITE** and millions of citizens are concerned, there is only one issue in the presidential campaign this year. Decency in government transcends all other issues. For without honesty in public places and a firm currency, democracy cannot function. It becomes merely a myth and a fraud perpetrated on the people at their expense. And this year the blame clearly falls on both parties. The stench is nauseous. Democrats and Republicans alike are tarred with the same brush. The worthy can expect to suffer with the infamous. Because the people are outraged.

Here in Massachusetts we have been treated to the shameful, shocking spectacle of the leadership of both parties racing pell-mell in panic-stricken flight to the State House, vying with each other to be the first to erase the memory of their greed in the "pen-sion" and other scandals. Never before, was the power of public moral indignation so dramatically emphasized, or the conduct of politicians so craven in the face of it. Millions sitting beside their radios and televisions throughout the State, and in the other New England states, supplemented the hundreds packing the legislative auditorium who listened to Gov. Dever's address in stony silence. Rarely has there ever been such a stinging rebuke to so specious evasion of the issue.

All over the United States, apparently, the voters are of like mind. The unprecedented,

ominous defections in the South, the lessened Republican vote in Maine, the early elimination of prominent key figures in both of the parties, the tremendous upsurge in registrations, all are portents of things that soon may come.

We have always said that when eventually, the pendulum turns, the Democrats will be swept out of office by a mighty tide. If this year such is not the case, it will be because the electorate is voting against what it hates, rather than for what it believes in. Because in spite of the General's spectacular personality, many voters consider that Stevenson—hampered and hamstrung though he is, by an inescapable collar of Trumanism, is the abler and more experienced figure, the man with a conviction of what he wants to do, and what needs to be done. He has not proved it so far.

But whichever man wins, the American People need to draw a lesson from the Massachusetts "mess". Let us never forget the power of moral indignation. Let us remember, that the election is only a stepping stone. For it will resolve nothing, if the public immediately becomes apathetic. If the people are, through resolute action, to have a respite from the present stresses and strains, they will have to continue to demand responsibility from their representatives. You cannot delegate loyalty. Nor expect absentee ownership to maintain high standards of integrity. There is no substitute for an eternal, demanding vigilance. If the people want good government and the good life, with more abundant living, they can have it. Any day they want it, and are willing to pay the price.

The real trouble in America today & elsewhere in the world is our laxity in the face of moral values. He who touches pitch inevitably becomes defiled. It is not a particular political party that is noxious; it is the very system of political management and exploitation that is rotten to the core. You cannot pass corrupt practices laws and then calmly evade them with impunity. You cannot associate with political machines which are in turn allied with thugs and hoodlums, and expect your character to remain pure & wholesome. Either we have got to raise our political machinery out of the poisonous mud and slime which infests it, or we have got to forget we're decent human beings. We have got, and for all time, to rid our society of the Costellos, or decide to become like them. There is no half-way room for compromise.

We have wasted 7 years trying to reach an honorable peace with the Soviets. Would you expect to get anywhere with kidnappers, murderers, and those who are savagely abnormal? No! You do not necessarily have to go to war with such perverted folk. But in civil life we do not accept them as our equals. Nor do we allow them to tamper with our courts. Yet for all of these years we have allowed United Nations to be hamstrung and world justice to be mocked and scorned. Let's stop it now!

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FUNDAMENTALS OF GOOD POETRY

By Elva Ray Harris

THE POETS WORKSHOP

The Workshop meets to consider Clarence O. Adams' poem this month. Many people sent us their thoughts about "Grief's Desolation" & also how it could be improved. But before we hear what they have to say, let's clear up a little matter left over from the last Workshop, the one in which we discussed Helen Nyk's poem, "Storm Flower". Several readers seemed confused as to whom "she" referred. As a matter of general interest we asked Helen to tell us whom or what she had in mind when she wrote the poem. She replied: "I was much interested and grateful for the criticism and comment on my verse. Mary Grant Charles came very near to what was meant by the use of the word 'she'. 'She' is a woman, the spectator of the oncoming storm and she sees in the shattered pimpernel at her feet, the end of summer and the end of her own spring dreams. At the same time, she gathers strength from the bold and frowning cliff which for so long has held aloft the light against the destruction of the waves."

Thank you, Helen. The more we can talk over a poem, back and forth, and find out what is in each other's minds, the better a Workshop will be. Here is Mr. Adams' poem:

GRIEF'S DESOLATION

A wind came sighing through the trees,
In the wake of storm and knew no rest.
The grass salamed on bended knees
And sent its supplication to the west.

The horizon was dark with somber clouds.
The sun went listlessly over the sill
Of night, and left in its wake tinged
shrouds,

Which faded to a gray and murky frill.
And in the wood no sound was heard,
Through the cloying damp of rain-soaked
leaves.
Except one weary note from a lonely bird:
Then all was quiet as a heart that
grieves.

Mr. Adams has been a faithful critic in the Workshop for several months. He has pulled no punches in his sincere effort to help the other poets. He will be gratified to see the long line of interested people who've taken time out from summer activities, demonstrate with the "hatchets" they hold in "friendly" hands.

Particularly helpful, I think, is the comment of Gertrude Durand. She says: "This is, I assume, intended to be a symbolic poem. The aftermath of a violent storm (nature) is used to represent the desolation caused by a crushing grief. It seems to me the symbolism should be carried out in the title. Or else the title should read simply, 'Desolation'. This could be construed either as symbolic, or natural."

Julia Polinski also suggested "Desolation"

as a title. And while we are discussing the title we'll leave Miss Durand's letter aside long enough to jot down some more ideas.

Alice Lazo says: "Is Mr. Adams trying actually to make us feel 'let down', from the very beginning? Or is the poem supposed to be symbolic of the desolation of a grief. I wish he had said what kind of trees the wind was sighing through. I would mention such a fact in the very title, 'Storm in the Cottonwoods'."

Margaret Hill Concannon stood up for this poem's title as it is.

Elle B. Flagg thinks it is too depressing and suggests instead, "The Quietness of Grief". Jessie H. Hartling would discard "Desolation" and would entitle it, "Grief-Spent".

Leaving the title, Gertrude Durand states "The oriental salaam is a ceremonial greeting. A salutation, not a supplication, and, so, it does not belong in this poem. It holds no suggestion of desolation. In fact, there is a slight suggestion of humor inappropriate to this poem."

Alice Lazo disagrees: "'The grass salaamed on bended knees'— is a fine personification." Helen Hye commented that it was certainly an effective word picture. Margaret Hill Concannon writes: "'Salaam' is an oriental salutation meaning 'peace'. I think it is not used correctly in this poem." Only a few other comments on this clause, and that surprises me. For I reacted to the unintentional humor and I thought more people would, too.

In connection with the 3rd and 4th lines, Helen Betikofer has an interesting thought. The word 'WEST' puzzles me, except obviously, that it rhymes with 'rest'. Perhaps it means where a figurative sun went down leaving a personal darkness. Or possibly Mr. Adams meant the word to convey a larger meaning, as for instance, the desolation of the peoples of the world looking to the West in supplication."

Bertha Fairbanks and Gertrude Durand both ask how the author knows the sun went down, if the horizon is dark with clouds? "The overtones of the word 'sill' are too cramped & narrow to be applied to the horizon or to anything so vast as night," says Miss Durand & she continues, "Another 'wake' is not good. 'Tinged shrouds' is an awkward combination. Also, a shroud is a wrapping for the dead & belongs in a grave, not trailing about the sky! It is always white or black, never tinged. Shrouds do not fade, they decay or moulder, and certainly, never have a frill."

Helen Betikofer sides with Miss Durand: "I definitely do not like 'frill'. It comes so soon after 'shrouds', and to my way of thinking, strikes a discordant note, a rather frivolous note out of tune with the entire poem. Elle B. Flagg did not like the combin-

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ation of "murky" and "frill". Iva Lennard suggested: "'tinged wreaths', as it seems to me the thought Mr. Adams is trying to give us, is ghostly. And the word 'frill' is not appropriate, appearing too happy or frivolous."

Julia Polinski also objected to the phrase "tinged shrouds" on the grounds that it was "awkward to the tongue, or even silent reading". I agree with all of them, but in fairness to Mr. Adams, and in the interest of accurate reporting, let me say that Agnes C. Lomax stuck up for him in this instance: "The 'tinged shrouds', 'somber clouds', 'murky, etc.' That's the value of a friendly discussion—several different opinions, no cut and dried right or wrong.

"Cloying" is not the right word," states Gertrude Durand. "It has taste overtones. A word suggesting soggy, sodden, clogging would be better." Helen Betikofer adds: "'Cloy' is the equivalent of 'surfeit', too much of something, and Mr. Adams means, of course, too much damp. But the average person more probably, it seems to me, would get the image of too much of something 'sweet'."

There were some good comments about the mood of the poem. Helen Nye says: "Mr. Adams was obviously trying to achieve a tone of grief and loneliness, and verse written in such a mood has a certain appeal to many people, especially when it reflects their own feelings of particular moments. He succeeded well in creating this feeling; But I would like also to point out now to him the criticism that I received last month from Carol James. She suggested that, like many others, she greatly preferred to have poems end on an up-note. I was grateful for the suggestion because I think it is very true. All too often, a tone of sadness is apt to dominate the thoughts of a verse writer in a contemplative mood. But his reader may very likely be looking longingly for light hearted entertainment or enjoyment."

Ella B. Flagg suggests the following revision in order to end on an up note, that she also believes readers prefer.

"Except one buoyant note from a happy bird
To cheer the quiet heart that grieves."

And Bessie H. Hartling suggests:

"Just one weary note from a lonely bird
So quiet comes to the heart that grieves"

On the other side of the fence, Helen Betikofer also has very fine comment. "I hardly see," she says, "how the poem could end on a note of hope and still be called, 'Grief's Desolation'. The reader, I think, must supply his own 'uplift' in realizing that hope follows on the heels of desolation. After all, when one scrapes bottom there's no place to go but up. Mr. Adams has tried, with success, I think, to portray only that one bleak moment before the darkness begins to lift from the spirit. In my opinion, Mr. Adams has done well

in getting the feeling of that 'moment before hope begins' into his poem."

I think all who commented agreed that the basic idea and mood of this poem are good, & also that it needs revision. Let us hope that when Mr. Adams revises, he will not take out the good things he has put in his poem. For often happens. Several people commented on rhythm one way or another. I have not the space to report all opinions here, but I would like to point out that the rhythm has a lot to do with the mood. As most of you've noticed, some lines are longer than others. This is helpful in the expression of grief, a slow, drawn out thing. A long line, now and then, prevents the poem from marching along. Grief does not march, grief drags its feet. Hard to pronounce phrases also contribute to this slow mood.

Whatever else we said above about "tinged shrouds", it keeps the rhythm retarded. Because it is impossible to skim through it in speaking it or even reading it silently. But it is too hard to pronounce. Get an accurate word picture, Mr. Adams, but keep enough consonants to make the reader slow down. "Cloying damp" is a good example, and "rain-soaked leaves" also, of the way a series of consonants that take time to pronounce, slow a meter down that otherwise might go along too fast. Change "cloying" but keep its rhythm.

In contrast to these phrases is the fourth line:

"And sent its supplication to the west".

Read it and see how hard it is to keep from spinning it off your tongue. Overdoing this business of slowing down, of course, can be as bad the other way. We don't want poems that read like prose or tongue-twisters. Hit the happy medium.

In December we discuss:

COURAGE

By Josephine Murray Emma

Just like an ant whose sandy home
A broom had quickly felled.
Her world had tumbled down on her
To crush the worth it held.

And like an ant escaping from
His house on powdered sand,
She started to rebuild again—
This time, on firmer land!

Deadline for comments on this poem is November 10th. Each poem you send for a Workshop must be accompanied by a comment. (We pay \$1. for each poem used.) If you have no ideas for improving this poem, write in and tell us why you like it at least. Poets can learn just as much analyzing the good qualities in a poem as the not-so-good.

Remember that comments are passed on to a poet concerned. Some of the poems criticized have been drastically revised and placed elsewhere. Many poets have learned much.

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SOME EDITORIAL COMMENT

Peggy Graves, who edits 8 Love story magazines at POPULAR PUBLICATIONS, 205 E. 42nd St., NYC 17, which pay 1¢ and up on acc., was quoted in The WRITER (Sept.) as saying, "The two features which I feel add up to a 'good love story': a fast-moving plot and subjectivity, the latter most often achieved by the creation of a hero or heroine with whom the reader can easily identify himself. A third and naturally relative, quality is that often intangible something called glamor."

These are the fundamentals of story-telling, not just Love stories. It is good that an editor puts her finger on them so squarely. REWRITE wishes to point out that they're just as true for the Slicks as the Pulps. A definition sometimes means several things to several people. "Fast-moving" does not necessarily mean a murder or a passionate kiss on every page. It does mean a story that develops the important relations between characters steadily and excitingly. Not a lot of reverie and stream of consciousness.

"Glamor" does not mean black velvet and a slinking vampire in decollete. It means the color of ordinary life heightened and given an intensification of meaning. The glamor of life as we all would like to live it, can be caught in surroundings far removed from the Waldorf and the gilded trappings of a Hollywood night club. If you document your story so that the reader really feels he is on the stage, and if you project the emotion, so a reader can feel it as if it were actually & genuinely happening to him, you will be securing much of the glamor that Miss Graves, and all the other editors are begging for.

To get the sights and sounds and smells & touch of the experiences that move people in the life around us is the "trick" that professionals work a lifetime to master with a skill and effortless technique that amateurs just do not realize exist. Don't be a hammy amateur. No one needs to be. Even if you've very little aptitude for words, you can—at least be natural and genuine.

Which reminds me, writers who have to keep the kettle boiling until their ship comes in, would do well to read the "Rostrum" article in the Sept. issue of The WRITER. Its called, "I Sell My Neighbors", and in spite of a sizable dose of very much over-forced humor (you can learn from studying this phase), it contains some very practical and specific as well as interesting advice on how to reap a harvest in your own backyard. Lois Miller did.

What to Do with Back Copies. Frequently, we get inquiries and/or offers of back copies. Of course we sell back copies of REWRITE to those desiring them for a reasonable fee. A writer who wishes to get rid of a too bountiful supply, should consult the local public library or some other similar institution. A lot of these welcome additions to the files.

THIS MONTH'S BOOKS

BEYOND THE HIGH HIMALAYAS. William C. Douglas. Doubleday & Co. \$5.00. Justice Douglas has combined in this fascinating travel book his love of mountains and people with an observant report on the dramatic struggle for the heart of Asia between Communism, Democracy and the old traditions of the people. A beautiful book illustrated in color.

HOMER, THE HANDYMAN. Preble D.K. Hatch. Thomas Y. Crowell Co. \$2.00. A second book from the author of "Don't Shoot the Bill Collector". Maine humor is rapidly reaching a saturation point. Especially when the publisher and, at times, the author are not wholly sure whether to play it pizzicato or con s'more. This book for the most part is equally divided between natural, if not too well organized, humor and the accurate pen picture of a well loved character, who tugs occasionally at your heart-strings. We wish the author had made up his mind.

SCOLLY SQUARE. Pearl Schiff. Rinehart & Co. \$3.00. A realistic first novel about Boston's "liberty town" for sailors. An accurate, solid study of sex. The book is well written, but the story would be more convincing if a stronger and deeper understanding of the MC had been developed. As it is, she seems only a convenient excuse enabling the author to explore microscopically the slime and viciousness of a sailors' red light district.

AMY VANDERBILT'S COMPLETE BOOK OF ETIQUETTE. Doubleday & Co. \$5.75 (Includes Index). The author is a successful public relations expert of long standing. Also a warm, friendly person. The publishers one of the largest in the U. S. So this type of "bread and butter" literary property, which took 4 years of preparation, was rather inevitable. The emphasis is on gracious living rather than arbitrary and traditionally fixed rules. It is slanted also at average people rather than those having great estates and many servants. You can learn from observing this book's "points".

BOOKS WE CAN RECOMMEND

A GUIDE TO CREATIVE WRITING. Roger H. Garrison. \$2.95. Really a guide to the creative-thinking that underlies successful writing. A very popular book that is practical.

RADIO & TELEVISION WRITING. Max Wylie. \$6.50. Still one the best standard texts on a subject of absorbing interest to writers.

PLOT DIGEST. Kobold Knight. \$4.00. A highly practical book we import specially from England. One of the very few books on Plotting

THE ART OF WRITING FICTION. Mary B. Orvis. \$4.00. An exceptionally helpful text. Backed with practical, specific illustrations of how well known writers handled technical and thematic problems. The author stresses fact that fiction reflects experience.

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A STORY HAS SEVERAL LINES OF INTEREST

The other day an editor criticized one of our readers in rejecting a ms. He said, "you don't know yet how to build a smooth-reading narrative." What he meant was that the ms. lacked a continuity that moved easily along a line of interest that drew the reader toward the ending. This is a common defect in the mss. of many inexperienced writers. And it occurs largely because the authors don't make clear in their own minds just what are the elements that constitute a good continuity.

The basic factors that make for a line of interest are, of course, either a story, or a comment on the situation by the author. A story consists of a happening built around a problem or a decision. The MC faces a turnabout in the road of life, change. An author comments on a situation when pointing to an irony, or when he displays indignation. Edna Ferber was indignant when she retold the story of the Christ child in terms of a Polish mother and son at the outbreak of war, in 1939. The "perfect crime" story is often an ironic story.

But it is not enough to have a line of interest, no matter how good. The line naturally, must be unbroken. And it must continually move forward. This means that a writer must at all times know what he is about. He has got to be able to control the line. A story is artificial in that sense, that the line moves with none of the distractions and seeming aimlessness of life, which is a web of numberless overlapping lines of interest running more or less parallel. In a story a reader singles out one continuity, and uses that for his thread.

Actually a smooth-reading narrative grows out of several lines of interest. The reader is not aware of these. At least he ought not to be, if they function correctly. They serve their purpose quietly beneath the surface. But the single effect and drive of an exciting story (an effect that may be physical, mental or emotional, or all three) is the product of the several lines of continuity cooperatively functioning together.

I have already hinted at one of these enduring lines. Whether it be story or editorial purpose, the narrative must first own a strong idea. There must be a mental line of interest. The reader thinks along the intellectual thread. The story must convince his mind step-by-step as it proceeds. Here then, is one line that must be continuous. A hole or weak link will shatter the effectiveness of the whole line. This is one of the weaknesses you see most often in the mss. of an inexperienced writer. Not many writers when they first start out are good logicians. It is an essential of their craft, however.

But fiction writing makes its greatest appeal through the emotions. So, it naturally

follows that the intellectual continuity is supplemented by an emotional one. Therefore, when you have checked through the length of your story to see if it holds water logically, you must go through it again to see how the emotional line of interest runs. It is your job to keep each of these moving right through the entire story.

I cannot emphasize too strongly the necessity of considering every line or thread in your story as a continuous one. You need to trace it all the way through. Watch it very carefully to see that none of the scenes in the story are irrelevant. This is one way a thread can be snapped. Another is at points of transition. Before you can be rated as a competent professional, you must learn what devices are necessary to tie a continuity in such a way that all the parts become integral units in the whole scheme. Thus, it is not enough to choose the right scenes. It's necessary also to see that they grow out of whatever material precedes them, and lead into whatever follows. Finally, you must ever be sensitive to the fact that all of the various lines you build through your story—as a whole—must also run continuously through the scenes.

But the several lines that I have already mentioned, are not the only lines in a story. There is the matter of "time" in a story. If you will consider almost any story that you are familiar with, you will quickly realize that there is story "time" and the universal "time" and background against which this story is told. We had a good illustration a few days ago in a story we read for analysis. It was a dramatized sketch of the life, and times, of the celebrated portrait painter, Gilbert Stuart. Now in the course of his artistic growth he returned to Scotland and England a couple of times. And this occurred just about the time of the American Revolution. Since any reader would know that it would be difficult to do this during a war, it became essential for the author to keep a careful account of time, both in Stuarts life and in the flow of political affairs. Moreover, it was necessary to relate these. The reader wanted to know at a glance each time Stuart crossed the ocean just what "time" it was in relation to the impending war. It is not necessary to be pedantic about this. It should be shown or indicated by the action. Study some published mss. for this device.

Then, there is the story that is told in a series of flashbacks or an unusual pattern. Here, chronological time may differ radically from "stage" time. It is important to appreciate that life flows along continuously both before the story begins and after we've reached the ending. Therefore, if you "cut" up the natural flow of time and action, and piece your scenes together in an artificial pattern for dramatic effect, it is obvious, isn't it, that you will have two more or less parallel lines. Again, you must keep the relation between real life and drama clear.

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AN AFTERNOON AT THE THEATER

On a recent Saturday afternoon Elva and I took a busman's holiday. We drove 35 miles, through our beautiful rolling hills, to take in a matinee of "Jezebel's Husband", a play by Robert Nathan, which was being given for a week at the County Playhouse in the Shoppers' World at Framingham. The play is said to be on its way to Broadway; in fact, author and the star, Claude Rains, were working intensively upon it then. For in conversation afterwards one of the young summer actresses informed her family and myself that in that very performance Mr. Rains had incorporated a new scene that had not been in the play the previous evening.

It was a comparatively new experience for Elva to see a play that was being hacked up and sewed together again performance by performance. I think if the supporting cast had been a bit better and we had not faced such a long drive over twisting roads, we'd have stayed to see it over again in the evening. Elva was still talking excitedly about "Rob-in-hood", the motion picture, parts of which we had scrutinized four times. "You only begin really to see a play the second time you watch it," she commented. Which is very true.

"Jezebel's Husband" was particularly valuable for us, because there were so many interesting things wrong with it and "missed" opportunities. For it has a great theme and plenty of quiet drama. Briefly it is a story of Jonah, the prophet, who is married to Jezebel. For a number of years she has made him prophecy what the people want. The result is he is living a plush existence, and is very unhappy and frustrated. Comes a new young prophet, Micah, a fire-eater from the desert, who is everything that Jonah used to be. The authorities having been too long in power, have grown complacent even as ours & are seeking to buy off the threat of Asiatic hordes on the border (they were Assyrians in those days, Russians today).

Into this situation steps Jonah's old love, Judith, who is also dissatisfied with wealth and power that a convenient marriage brought her. The match is lighted to the keg and the drama begins. Not the least of the values is the emphasis upon the eternal verities, and the parallel between biblical times and our own. It could be a smashing Broadway box-office success, if the timing and the emotional impact are "right".

The first problem of course is the biblical background. Few lay playgoers have that knowledge of the actual characters to judge the story authoritatively. In a sense it is not necessary, if the play is compelling enough. But Mr. Nathan has compounded danger for himself by apparently taking liberties, and changing history quite a bit to suit his purpose which, basically, is a good one. He also had not made up his mind clearly as to just what he wished to underscore. We found

the play intensely interesting for this lack of polish. Stray ends had not been eliminated and the central line of interest intensified. Elva said now she saw for the initial time in actual practice why I am so adamant in teaching this principle.

Another angle to this problem developed in the unskillful handling of "viewpoint". Now on the surface you might say there can't be viewpoint in the fiction sense in a play. A dramatist, however, must make up his mind as to who is his main character. Mr. Nathan had not done that when we saw the play. Jonah in both the title and the starred actor was the MC; in the final scene where Jezebel made a deal with the king of the Assyrians, she dominated the action; and from the point of view of audience sympathy Judith, Jonah's former sweetheart, was by all odds the most interesting character. She stood for the eternal values. Before this play reaches Broadway a decision will have to be made as to who is to be the MC.

The line of interest did not flow steadily forward. There were holes, as when all of Jonah's luncheon guests went in to lunch and then Judith appeared alone on the scene, no build up or planting having prepared the audience for her appearance. The play moreover, changed tone. At various times it was dramatic, satirical, and farcical. The audience did not know what was expected of it. Elva commented that the characterization was not consistent. Jezebel, for instance, was much too wholesome and interested in Jonah's welfare until the final scene. And the parallel between the past and present was lost in the last act; it just ran out.

Repeatedly, the leading players were left while on stage with nothing to do. The feud between Judith and Jezebel was one-sided, & Judith was given no lines to hold up her end of the dramatic conflict. In two great dramatic scenes the emotional relationships did not develop. In the middle of the play Jonah became aware of his own desertion of his ideals; he refused to prophecy as the politician. Prince Azariah, wished him to, but as the angry mob turned on its leaders, he made the prophecy that was urgently needed. Judith, Jezebel, Azariah, Micah were all there but the emotional pull they exerted on Jonah was not properly brought out. It was a one-character scene instead of one in which all the characters took part on opposing sides, and fused. Again, when Jezebel changed lovers and made her deal with the Assyrians, we did not see all the overtones or the others take part in the scene, although Jonah did, in a partial way, urge her to be disloyal to him, so that he could return to the desert, to Judith and his old ideals. What was in Mr. Nathan's mind, he did not completely project into the audience's mind. The niceties of a powerful scene were lost and blurred.

The final meaning of the play was lost in a similar way. All through the action there

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was pounded home the thought that we cannot go back to yesterday and relive our past, but in the end Jonah went back to the good life of the desert, and to Judith, who loved the good virtues in him. God spoke to him again and he was a prophet. Life was going to be good again, although he was an old man, and was starting the hard, rugged life without a penny and none of the luxuries he had become used to. The truths these contradictions in physical terms presented, the inner salvation and security, were smudged. They lacked that burning intensity and belief on the part of the playwright which would make them convincing to an audience.

Finally, this play demonstrated the difference between the tasks of the dramatist & the fiction writer, particularly the novelist. Wittingly or not, Mr. Nathan was using the technique of the novelist. This play was full of exquisite little purple passages, a memorable line or gem-like thought scattered here and there through the dialogue. An inferior, pick-up summer stock cast couldn't polish these so they gleamed as they should have. But it is doubtful whether in the present loose construction of the play (as we saw it on that shining August day), anyone could properly do justice to these beautiful bits of colored prose. They had not been made an inherent part of the prose, as are the limpid, glorious poetry of Shakespeare in that great masterpiece of the English language—the tragedy of "Othello".

"Jezebel's Husband" was truly an exciting afternoon, if only because it was a laboratory demonstration of why the technical principles we constantly hammer in REWRITE, are so essential. When you stand up in public—whether you are writing a powerful story or only an angry letter to your weekly newspaper's "vox pop" column, you must have a wise or convincing thought to present, and skillfully and pungently you must present it with force, eloquently in a word. And no one can do that without preparation or long practice.

The real fascination that lies behind the hero-worship built up over the years by any public figure, stems from the audience's assurance that their man stands for something and is good in his line. Will Rogers unforgettably added to these gifts the "magical" solvents of humor and friendliness, and a devotion to the common welfare at the expense of personal comfort. Think upon these matters and endow your writing with them.

TIME AND LIFE MARCH ON

Our young fellow, Billy, who occasionally displays a clairvoyance in sundry directions, is only just now at seven years beginning to throw off his distaste for diesels. He never was really frightened as some youngsters are, at the sight of onrushing steam engines. But he has always kept diesels at a respectful distance. It came to me the other day a generation of boys and girls soon to appear

on the scene, will have no choice in such an important matter, just as many boys & girls now living have not seen a horse. Probably for many years to come children will nevertheless enjoy stories about steam engines & witches. But let us remember that in today's world children like to read about such monsters as steam shovels and jet propelled airplanes and even remote-controlled "drones".

It is well for writers to think occasionally upon this idea that backgrounds do not stand still. Rather they are constantly altering their shapes and character. And the law of the jungle says: learn to adapt yourself or prepare to be left behind. A writer has to be very adept at spotting these continual changes a considerable time ahead, & making them fit his purposes. As you succeed in doing this you stand a better chance and will make a greater number of sales.

NEWS AND EDITORIAL COMMENT

Les Cahiers du Bibliophile, Claudian Society, 11 Blvd. Flandrin, Paris, France, critical catalogue of news & sales of interest to bibliophiles, received recently.

The ARCHER, Box 3857, Victory Center Sta., North Hollywood, Calif., distributes a small mimeo folder about its verse contests. Two of these are open until Nov. 15, 1952. commendable idea: sponsored contests publicized in The Archer are required to carry a top prize of at least \$5 in cash.

Some time ago the NEWS BULLETIN of The Institute of International Education carried a stimulating commentary on the American Theater by Moshe Shamir, Israeli playwright. He acutely put his finger on the stultifying & deadening force of Commercialism, which has steadily lessened the number of productions on Broadway. He found that "In Broadway everybody knows how. Nobody knows why or what for." He further commented on the "mediocre copies of Broadway hits" generally presented in community theaters, and that the hope of the Theater lies in the better university and art institute theaters.

REWRITE has felt for many years that high costs (commercialism) have been killing the golden goose in both the theater and books. The terrific lines and demand for seats when any summer theater offers a star in a really good play at inexpensive prices, gives a tangible and damning "rebuttal" to the producers and publishers, who accept the economic slavery forced upon them by the real estate exploiters and union labor dictators & "what's in it for me?" boys all along a production line.

But in the final analysis what the theater and book world needs is clear-eyed, imaginative folk with courage and determination, who will refuse to be bamboozled & hamstrung by economic roadblocks set up for personal & quick profit. The creative demand of a pub-

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lic hungry for nourishing entertainment must be met. That is one frontier on which freedom is seriously being curtailed. In the long never-ending fight for human rights against property rights, we must not allow the issue to become clouded and confused. A shorter work week and costlier machines are a great advance. But when they drive millions out of the market and deprive them of the food and satisfying stimulation they need, it's time to pause for an accounting and find out the direction in which true freedom lies.

CAT, Raymond D. Smith, Room 1204 House Bldg., Pittsburgh 22, Pa., has been reported as being slow pay (it took 2 months to report on some poems). But it sent its check for 10¢ a line in this instance with the acceptance.. It is reported to accept fiction about cats and cat-owners, as well as articles (of the "help" variety) from 1,500 to 2,000 words. A good general article about cats would be acceptable also, apparently.

The Durham Chap Book. Although Bill & Elva did not go back to the UNH Conference, we continued to sponsor through REWRITE & with our friend, Loring Williams, editor of that fine poetry magazine, AMERICAN WEAVE, the annual award that has been given for some seven years now. We have sought, more or less, to encourage some promising, unknown poet in attendance at the Conference. It is a rather demanding award, since it requires about 500 lines of good quality verse.

This year the winner was Keith Moore, Corpus Christi, Texas, poet, who, it appears, is entering the Yale Divinity School this fall. Loring was the sole judge of the entries. We consider his critical judgment sound and we will review the Chap Book when it is issued in the near future. It is good to have this young poet added to the previous winners of an award that has won praise among critics.

STORY-A-DAY, Lucile Gulliver, 157 Newbury St., Boston 16, Mass., reported Sept. 10th, that it had been "reorganized in Charlotte, N. C., on May 9th & 10th (1952). I am going to Charlotte this week-end, when we are expecting that final decisions will be made.

"We hope to announce a publication date in a short time. The magazine is not to be issued this month, nor am I yet ready to consider mss. After this coming meeting I will send you full details."

So this much delayed new publication will not appear in the early fall, as was stated in other writers' magazines.

News at WCS House. As this issue was being closed up, Bill expected to dash up to Portsmouth, N. H., for a meeting of the Piscataqua Pens, a writing group formed from Doris Marston's writing group at the YWCA. Several personal conferences were held at WCS House just before this take-off. Bill spoke before the Lunenburg Historical Society in August.

HOW GOOD DO YOU "SEE"?

A small thing, but important. In letters and notes to us, we notice constantly small errors in regard to proper names, the names of magazines, etc. Some comments are incomplete; perhaps the full address is not given, or possibly the zone number is left off. This is often done in published reports, we notice, in writers' magazines that ought to be able to edit the copy correctly.

As we say, these are small matters. We're always glad to hear from correspondents and to get market reports. But if these divergencies occur in personal comments, there is a good chance they also occur in mss. That means the ms., if accepted, has to be cleaned up by an editor before it goes to a compositor. Perhaps you say, that's what editors are for. But if your copy is "lazy" and sloppy, you certainly are not giving teachers an apple. Instead, you are handing him a head-ache. So don't be surprised if whenever it's a thin line between acceptance and rejection, your ms. comes back. Sometimes, it is just a matter of an editor not having enough time to shine up your ms. for you. Be wise, therefore, do all the cleaning up you can before you send a ms. in.

You can look words up in the dictionary & restudy your book on grammar and constructing sentences correctly. You can even get a copy of the magazine; if you do nothing more than observe some of the things the editors don't let their writers do, you will be doing some polishing that will save the editor's time. See how the magazine is made up. If you can shape your ms. so all the editor will have to do is to mark it for sizes and variations of type, he will bless you. Especially in articles for newspapers you can insert the small sub-heads with which articles are broken up.

Once on a paper I worked on, staff men were made to triple space at certain intervals & insert a sub-head, then triple space again, continue the line of interest. This was because it is hard to insert these small sub-heads along the margin without writing them sideways. A linotype man then has to remove the copy from its holder, type the sub-head with one hand and replace the copy. Either that or jiggle it back and forth in the moving slide, which is difficult and slow. You know, of course, that the sheets of your ms. are pasted end to end, so they can be a continuous length of copy. If marginal instructions are written too close to the top or the bottom of a page, they will get pasted under and that means more trouble for the editor. The more you can save him trouble, the more likely you are to separate him from some of the cash the "front office" snatches from a bunch of advertisers, and which it "guards" jealously, according to many editors.

Before a writer could become a professional, he should have to work as an editor!

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NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE

The HORN BOOK, Jennie D. Lindquist, 585 Boylston St., Boston 16, Mass., magazine about books for children, has moved to larger quarters closer to the Public Library.

DEER & DACHSHUND, Judson Crews, Taos, New Mexico, is an experimental magazine.

The GRAZER, Hamilton, Texas, is a monthly.

The ARTS, another Little magazine, published in Los Angeles, Cal.

The PROGRESSIVE FARMER, which has separate editions published in Raleigh, N. C., Birmingham, Ala., Memphis, Tenn., and Dallas, Tex., prints 8 suggestions on the back of its rejection slips, among which are the following practical hints:

(1) Already has published or available similar material.

(2) Advises correspondents to study the magazine and note that "we print—chiefly experience letters of agricultural or country life progress; brief, crisp reports of things accomplished rather than lengthy essays & long communications." (This is a different policy from some of the other farm magazines. Ed.)

(3) We cannot accept lengthy verse, political or denominational articles, long resolutions, reports of freaks or curiosities, letters unsound in agricultural teaching, or articles designed to get free publicity."

(4) Many good articles go to the wastebasket because "received too late... Try to mail articles 2 or 3 months before they ought to appear."

(5) Really good farm photos always welcome, and "we are glad to pay for them."

TOO MANY MSS. IN THE MAIL?

Every so often we get reports about writers who keep prodigious numbers of mss. always in the mail. Recently a correspondent, reporting some news passed on by an editor, told us a well known poet keeps "100 poems in the mail all the time." To which gentle Elva in a most unusual moment of asperity replied: "Maybe fewer would sell more."

The thought of 100 poems buzzing around in the air appalls a "tone deaf idgit" like myself. I could sooner jump through a hoop 60 feet up. But there is also the item of postage. It must be enormous. From a dollars & cents angle it is not economical to spend a hundred dollars to sell \$75 worth of material.

But there is also the question of quality & actual worth. Another well known poet brags about the 50,000 sonnets and more he's written and how many he can turn out in an hour. Many of the greatest writers, however, have

HOW'S YOUR BATTING AVERAGE?

Here are acceptances reported to us in the past month:

Norton Weber

Short Story: AMERICAN Magazine.

(The sale made by Ingrid Hallen another member of the WCS Family. Hurrah!)

Ridgely Cummings

Short Stories: DEER & DACHSHUND and The GRAZER.

Poem: WESTMINSTER.

Article: The ARTS.

Lydia L. Roberts

Articles: C.S.MONITOR, SUNSHINE & Port-land PRESS HERALD.

Marjorie S. Scheuer

Poems: CAT (3), C.S.MONITOR.

Prize letter: Boston TRAVELER.

Belva M. Wilson

Poems: AM. BARD, THOUGHT & ACTION.

Marjorie McClellan Flint

Article: C.S.MONITOR (Travel Page).

Winona Nichols

Article: LIFETIME LIVING.

Alice Morse

Poem: CAT.

Gilean Douglas

Articles: Canadian Home JOURNAL, Family HERALD, WORLD OUTLOOK, IMPROVEMENT ERA and many others.

Poems: N.Y. HERALD TRIBUNE, OREGONIAN, UNITED PUBLICATIONS, COUNTRY POET etc.

Ella B. Flagg

Poem: Boston HERALD.

Agnes C. Lomax

Filler: Editors' SYNDICATE.

Send in your notes. They help others.

been remembered for just one memorable item or a comparatively few unforgettable lines. A newspaperman is justly proud of the copious amounts of copy he can turn out under unexpected pressure. That is part of his job. A creative writer is under no such pressure & certainly should not allow his egotism to run riot in that direction.

One of the ablest writers of Westerns, Max Brand (Frederick Faust in real life), wrote over 100 books, countless "Dr. Kildare" volumes and is still being published 8 years after his untimely death (new novels!) Yet he was always a careful writer whose quality is far above the most of his competitors. Point being that any fool can put a large assortment of mss. in the mail. But suppose every one of them is unreadable and unpublishable. What does it prove? To keep 200 of these in the mail is a feat. But so is eating paperclips.

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THE MAKING OF A FEATURE ARTICLE

Feature article writing is the staple, the bread-and-butter, line that can start every writer on his way. It can also finance your writing career while you are waiting for an opening in the fiction or poetry or dramatic fields. It is the one type of writing most universally in demand. And it is the one that is widest open to the fairly competent free lance writer. If you can write good English and be interesting and provocative in writing about a subject of importance for a sizable circulation of readers, editors usually will listen respectfully while you proposition them.

The first task of course is to get a subject. This varies according to the locale & the size of your readership. A feature story deals with people, organizations & things in the news. In a feature story you attempt to tell the reader about some unnoticed angle of an event or personality at the exact time it is in the news. This feature must be not only important and appropriate to news-coverage of the main topic, but it must also be of interest to the readers. It should open their eyes to another facet of the news that is happening in their bailiwick. Mere rewriting of history is not enough.

In this connection many average competent feature writers, who can handle the facts & write them up fairly well, miss the meaning behind these facts. Or fail to see the significance they carry for a special audience of readers. At the Maine Conference I told a story about writing under pressure an extraordinarily long feature about the 75th Anniversary of the incorporation of the Town of Nahant in Massachusetts. Later, Mr. Woodbury of The Portland Sunday PRESS-TELEGRAM politely pointed out that the newspaper business had changed. Such a long, historical piece would not be used today. I would go even farther. I would say it would not have been used by a great majority of the papers at the time it was written. I had to take into account the fact that the Boston TRANSCRIPT was published by a family, many of whose close friends in the wealthy, aristocratic set resided in Nahant. Also, I was writing for a paper that in some ways was a literary and quality magazine that had a larger circulation at that time in the libraries of the Nation and the world than even the exalted N. Y. TIMES. My editors knew this and told me to handle history that involved famous names in our country's literary, political and diplomatic circles with this angle in mind.

Both from the selling point of view & the interest of your readers, you have to be alert for such special conditions. Sometimes the story that may have only a local interest, may be latently a national story. The reader is your measuring tape, and your own imagination should be your guide as to when to forget the ordinary standards & rules of thumb. The one universal "formula", if it is

a formula, is based on the reader. He wants to identify himself with an event or a character in order to enlarge his own experience. Just as in fiction, he desires that you discuss for him a problem. He wants to know the what for and why of things. Last summer, H. Addington Bruce, a member of the WCS Family, did a piece about the Isles of Shoals in The SHORELINER. It was timely because only during the summer are the islands occupied. It was interesting to the magazine's readers because the Isles lie within The SHORELINER'S beat and the article answered the question, why were these small rockpiles ten miles off Portsmouth important and yet now most of the once lavish summer cottages going to rack & ruin, and the sumptuous hotel maintained only with difficulty by a religious conference group?

To put a good feature story together, you try to think what it is that a reader wants to know. Suppose a 3-line news story should appear stating that Boon Island light, east roughly of the Isles was to be closed. The news story might merely say that the Government no longer found a need for this lonely lighthouse situated ten miles to sea. Readers would immediately be interested in what changes had occurred, why the light was not needed, and in not too much length, the history and drama connected with one of the isolated and dangerous stations in the light house service.

Out of your knowledge you would choose the five or six most vital and challenging topics connected with this subject, of example, and you would try to line them up in a progressive chain of interest that would build to a climax of interest. In this special instance, almost certainly one topic would be the controversial one of whether the lighthouse should not be kept open in the interest of the fishing boats and summer yachts, that dot this bay. (It guards an area where U. S. submarines can reach surprising depths close to the port where many of them are repaired or even built: Portsmouth Naval Station. Another topic!)

Whenever I write a feature I always try to end where I began. In other words to circle back. This gives the reader a sense of completion. So, I either build into the opening or plant later the material that gives me a springboard for my snapshot at the end. This is a simple, but very effective, device you see in many, many feature articles today. It consists usually of merely planting a twist of surprise or humor that the reader doesn't foresee because he does not know where your line of interest is going to lead. So, when you explode your little time-bomb at the end you give the reader not only that sense of a completed circle, but a lift of pleasurable emotion. Provided it is not forced, pushed.

Finally, a good feature is like a "guided tour". You draw the reader engagingly through the garden your enthusiasm cares to show him.

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THE ETERNAL VERITIES STILL PREVAIL.

REWRITE serves writers, editors and other professionals in the fields of writing, and selling. We are rather proud of our reputation for fair dealing and promotion of better relations among those concerned with every facet of writing. But here is a new angle we had never thought of before. A literary agent, in fact the agent for one of the big best sellers of a few years back, wrote us an unusual letter a few days ago. This agent has been a subscriber to REWRITE for a number of years.

"You know, or perhaps you don't," she said, "your REWRITE is a great inspiration to me." Then she went on to explain that in a big city like New York, where there are "a large number of people who keep to the law, and very large numbers who try to evade it, it's often difficult to work along the strictest & straightest lines—and we all know what they are. But competition is ghastly." she spoke of the few who offer unethical competition, by playing both ends (the writer and editor) against the middle. Or by seeking to seduce one agent's profitable clients and to persuade them to try another.

"So," she closed, "when I read your & Elva's newsheet, or get a letter from you, I feel encouraged in my trying to get where I want to be, in the right way. And, you know, they (writers) do so often lump 'us agents' together, and few publishers consider one a real friend."

We at REWRITE consider that one of the nicest compliments we could possibly receive. A compliment that cannot be bought. It ties in as a matter of fact with one of the virtues that we have always sought to cultivate for and in writers: loyalty. We have frequently explained to writers that when you find the good agent, you usually find a man or woman who in many cases, like the good publisher, has supported and befriended a writer in the lean times before the latter has been "discovered", or who stays with a client in the times when nothing seems to sell. None of the "ten percent boys", or those who dabble in a side-line of "criticism" will ever do that. They will not tell you the truth. In most instances they are not competent enough, either as critics or agents, to tell you truthfully where you stand.

Curiously, this letter followed by only a day or two a long talk I had recently about agents with a big name writer, who is quite near the top in his special field. At various times he has been represented by nearly a dozen agents. He told me that, currently, he is trying a new one—one of the advertising variety. Discretely, because we do not, ever, believe it wise to shake a writer's confidence in a border-line service he trusts, I told him what I know about this agent. I could not help feeling, though, that, knowing what I do about editorial reaction to this

agent, the relationship is going to hurt my author friend and greatly benefit the agent. He can use my friend's reputation to color his own. And I don't like that a little bit.

One of the reasons why we have warned our writer friends against the general run of advertising agents is that when you send someone to represent you and to sell your goods, you want to have that agent stand for the identical high standards you stand for. You don't, knowingly, buy a brand new, expensive name automobile from a shabby dealer in second hand cars. Well, neither do editors and a goodly number of them have told us in confidence, but clearly, what they think of this or that.

An agent in the final analysis is only so good to you as his reputation among editors. If they trust him to weed out the inferior, unsuitable mss.; if they know he won't ever try to outsmart them in a complicated "subsidiary rights" deal, other things being equal, he is your man. This world is built on credit and trust. An old time salesman newly working for a famous line of merchandise sold from door to door, came to our home recently. We fell into conversation about one thing and another. Finally, he said: "Do you know, I have been a salesman for 30 years. I have never seen anything like this before. A woman opens the door. I tell her who I represent. She says: 'Come in.' They are glad, and I mean glad, to see me. They trust me!"

This is a human, fallible world. But that is what I think this agent who wrote to us, was talking about. I know it is what we, at REWRITE, mean when we talk to you about editors, agents and yourself. Shakespeare said it before us and better than we can.

Bear that in mind in your relations. You do not build a by-line or a good name overnight. It is a sum of all the little things you have written under the first and done in the name of the second. May God grant, when your last piece is filed, that the burden of weight is heavy on the side of integrity and propriety. A writers' magazine can give you no greater gift than the means of forming a sound judgment in this respect.

LEISURE, James A. Knight, copy editor, 345 Adelaide St. West, Toronto, Canada, reports "Our plans for **LEISURE** are still somewhat indefinite and we doubt that we could give you any information at this time that would be of interest to prospective contributors." This is one of the Hugh C. MacLean publications.

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BE ALERT FOR EXPERIENCE

The other day Elva and I were sitting out in the warm September sun; she was readying grapes for home juice, I was harvesting the sunflower seeds we raise for the birds. Our talk drifted to the way one collects experience. Elva started the ball rolling by remembering how new and difficult some of the chores around our little acre seemed only 3 years ago, and now we do them easily, as if we had done them all our lives.

I brought up the old thought that man can spend a lifetime learning how to live, then his time comes and he can pass on very little of his acquired experience and cunning. We discussed the once very popular play, "Romance," by Edward Sheldon, the theme of which is that each man must burn his own fingers, on the candle of Experience. We observed in passing that perhaps that is one of the facets of good teaching. The great teacher is imaginative enough to recognize that all of his students must in their own way and time be ready for what he has to offer them, and hence he bides his time, then exercises his magic in helping them to open their eyes.

Elva recalled that not everyone can teach even though they know their subject well, & contrastingly the student may not be able to learn, even from the great teacher, who may occasionally lack the patience to see that a student needs further drilling in the easiest routines. She cited examples of persons who knew their stuff cold, yet weren't able to teach her as much as someone else who understood the subject less, but the principles of teaching better.

What value does all this have for writers anxious to get on with the business of selling a particular ms? Just that one phase of writing, indeed of living, is to try to acquire that detachment, which allows an individual to taste his experience even while he lives it and waits for it to mellow. If one loves the adventure of living enough, he can speed up considerably not only the gathering of experience, but also the assimilation of it.

And of course he can cultivate a sense of being alert for experience, when it arrives upon his doorstep. Many of us do not do the good reading that we should. We kill time & read columns of stuff that does not nourish us. Or we live in a rut, doing the same uninteresting things day after day. We do not

E. Harold Young, representative in the N. H. Legislature, and member of the WCS Family, is also secretary of the State Eisenhower-for-President Club. Covering the Convention both as a delegate and photographer, he worked out an ingenious gimmick. Having collected 150 negatives, he began selling them in batches of 50. Made quite a few sales. A good way to capitalize his reportage. Could be applied to other events besides political. That's one way to finance your writing!

tend ourselves to meet and sympathetically, creatively understand new people in different walks of life from our own. Even though it's common knowledge among writers that people, places and their backgrounds are all that we have to write about. Experienced reader that I am, I constantly catch myself just simply absorbing the books or short material I read, whereas when I read ms., every nerve and fiber of my being is actively waiting to be stimulated. I am waiting for my critical & creative senses to flare into action and begin to make suggestions as to how the ms. might be improved.

Not only that, but I find also I learn an awful lot from my ms. reading. I absorb the ideas and experience. These color my ideas, knowledge or philosophy of life. In a word, I am constantly adding to my accumulation of information; I am frequently putting two and three together and learning something or getting ready for a teaching job I do not in the least suspect is heading my way.

It is sometimes said that the gift of being alive is one we inherit, and that while we may use it we cannot cultivate it. That is nonsense. Just as energy ebbs and flows, so does the characteristic of being "alive." Some people retain it to their dying day at an extended age, others lose it as they get older. I know that for me it slackens whenever I get tired. But I believe that people who have that quality work at it, cultivate it and make it a part of themselves. Gertrude Lawrence, they say, refused to give up when sickness attacked her. But it wasn't just a case of the old theatrical cliche that "the show must go on". For her the adventure, the joy of creating, had become a way of life & an instinctive response. In a word, the goal we all should aim at.

THAT WE MAY SERVE YOU BETTER

Year by year that part of REWRITE'S circulation that is composed of duplicate subscriptions is slowly rising. The reason, of course, is that it is a great convenience to be able to file both articles and news, and market tips complete and separately. Whenever we wish to cut up any magazine, we always secure two copies.

Duplicate subscriptions. You can have two or more copies of REWRITE delivered regularly to the same address for only \$3.00. This is a convenience to us as well as you, since it helps us to pay the cost of larger press runs with a corresponding lower unit expense.

Prompt Renewals. This is the time of year when we have a lot of renewals coming due. A lot of extra clerical work can be avoided if members of the WCS Family will send in their payments promptly. Many subscribers do this for two years at a time now. This saves time at both ends of the line. We appreciate it.

WCS Circulating Library. Only \$2. per year plus postage both ways. Helps you to invest in books wisely. Saves you money.

REWRITE

SOME NEWS AND COMMENT

PRESBYTERIAN LIFE, Robert J. Cadigan, 321 So. 4th St., Phila. 6, Pa., was given a very enthusiastic "write-up" in an Aug. issue, of PATHFINDER. Cadigan, formerly a top editor, HOLIDAY, launched this new magazine where a lot of Presbyterian magazines had previously expired. Now, after 5 years, he has a magazine that is bought by churches, and individuals, representing a total circulation of 600,000 readers.

A Quaker himself, he has got non-Presbyterians to handle religious news, and has created a staff of young men and women. He accents positive Christianity that is practiced specifically by Protestant, preferably by Presbyterians. Pays 2¢ per usable word, not over 1,500 words. No poetry or fiction, and \$5 for pictures, all on publication.

A. D., Thomas Francis Ritt, 109 Greenwich Ave., NYC 14, was forced to suspend recently, but is laying plans for publication of a spring issue in 1953. A quarterly, its owner, A.D. Literary Association, a "non-profit organization. None of the staff receives honorariums for their talent or their time. It is a cooperative venture combining enthusiasm with a hunt for authors (of a literary & experimental type. Ed.) who have something to say and know how to say it....We need 2,500 more subscribers to make A.D. self-sustaining." (Subs. are \$2 per year. We were invited to assist in the campaign and receive an agent's commission of 75¢ per sub. We refused since our job is to report the news with complete impartiality for the benefit of editors and writers alike.) The A.D.L.A. publishes a news bulletin and sponsors lectures in NYC.

Publishing Angle. One way that publishers breathe life into their titles is similar to the special sale coupons dispensed by soap-tycoons. Thus, between September 1st & Nov. 1st, J. B. Lippincott Co. is giving retailers 1 "free" copy of "Windows for the Crown Prince" for each 10 the bookseller buys out of his own money. And just to show prospective authors (you?) when they start daydreaming how their royalties will flood in, let's point out (1) that this much discussed book has sold only 35,000 copies in 3½ months, & (2) Elizabeth Gray Vining won't get any royalties on those "free" copies.

Authors' League On Strike. By a vote that was almost unanimous (1139 to 63) members in all guilds voted on Aug. 27th to strike because the following members of the Alliance of Television Film Producers refused to negotiate a minimum basic contract. Curiously, radio writers cast the largest number of votes (45) and TV writers the smallest (3) against the proposed strike.

The Screen Writers' Guild, acting for the League, was seeking: (1) the principle that rights be leased instead of sold outright; &

(2) that writers may reserve rights supplementary to or other than television; and (3) that payment should be on a royalty basis.. As an associate member of the Authors Guild Bill voted for the strike. REWRITE earnestly urges all TV writers to respect a strike called to enforce just demands that seek to benefit them, whether they are members of a League guild or not. As the League wrote to its members: "This is a crucial test of the willingness and ability of American writers to act jointly to protect and advance their common interests...It is of vital importance to all writers to establish in TV practice, the principle that a writer owns whatever he writes and that, therefore, he may properly claim the profits and privileges of that ownership." This principle is recognized without question in business, where an inventor may patent the machines he creates. Therefore, why should it not be recognized in the realm of ideas? It should!

National Better Business Bureau, Irene V. Clynes, Chrysler Bldg., NYC 17, sent us recently copies of its file memoranda on:

Humanity Guild, Inc., 673 Broadway, NYC 12; Vantage Press, 230 W. 41st St., NYC; Daniel S. Mead, 419 4th Ave., NYC 16.

Any writer planning to spend any money with these or other firms about which he doesn't have full information, would do well to consult the New York Better Business Bureau or the above organization (they are separate), before he takes any action.

REWRITE, in this connection, has a standing offer: we are always glad to advise anyone free as to the merits of any service or magazine covered by our extensive file system known as the Central Ms. Markets File.. Our only interest is in seeing that writers get a dollar's worth of value for each dollar they invest.

"Vanity" Publishing. In Miss Clyne's letter to us she states ably and objectively the feeling most of us have regarding this much discussed and controversial subject:

"This Bureau," she writes, "knows of no objection to fully or partially subsidized publications, providing the authors understand that they are assuming the risk of publication in whole or in part, and that the publisher's prime profit can be derived from the subsidization rather than from the sale of the volume to the public."

The underscoring is ours, not Miss Clyne's. REWRITE has fought for 12 years this issue, in behalf of writers. We have stood, always, against "vanity" publication because it's our opinion and staunch belief that very few of all the writers who "subsidize" (pay the cost of printing) their own book, ever make this distinction. If they do, they numb their own instinctive caution with the Cinderella day-dream that "my book will sell." It won't!

REWRITE

RECIPE FOR A SALE

HIGHLIGHTS FOR CHILDREN. Garry Cleveland Myers, Honesdale, Pa., wrote us on Aug. 26:

"I wish you would find and develop a writer not hampered with a millstone of tradition, who would write us some mystery stories fit for children (appealing to boys 8 to 12), without suggestion of violence or the morbid, each a complete story within 1,000 words."

Mr. Myers is a member of our WCS Family & a real friend to writers, whom we greatly enjoyed meeting at the Philadelphia Conference this summer.

A PROJECT CLOSE TO OUR HEART

Here is a project that REWRITE is taking a special interest in. For a number of years, HOSPITALIZED VETERANS WRITING PROJECT, 919 No. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill., has been raising prizes donated by publishers, organizations and individuals. This year (6th annual writing contest) there were prizes totalling around \$2,500 in cash and awards to stimulate the creative activity of patients. REWRITE has steadily given 4 free subscriptions. We have always regretted that we are unable to continue these beyond the initial year.

So, this summer we suggested to Mrs. Elizabeth Fontaine, 2431 Webb Ave., University Heights, N. Y. (Her home address) that she try to organize some special fund that could be used to continue these subscriptions given by REWRITE and other writers' magazines, so that Veterans Administration Facilities, libraries, writers' clubs and individuals at the hospitals might continue to benefit. For it's obviously impossible for the magazines to multiply these free subscriptions by four annually. They would in time displace the paying subscribers. Some idea will probably be worked out another year. But if you have any good idea, or wish to contribute, we suggest you contact Mrs. Fontaine.

HERE IS A FIELD TO EXPLORE

Elva and I have been reading quite a number of the \$2.50 popular hard cover novels, which appear in large quantities. Our small public library at Lunenburg Center stocks a half-dozen titles a month, because they are "safe" in the estimation of our librarian & they tend to stimulate young readers in the habit of reading regularly.

These stories are not great literature or as long as the more expensive novels. They average 60,000 words in length. But neither are they offensive, as is the case of great numbers of the longer novels. Nor are they, surprisingly, unrealistic Cinderella stuff. True they usually do contain a love story & and it works out happily in the end. But the ones I have read tell a fairly good story & do it pretty well. They also contain a problem, often a strong theme. The characteriza-

A PRIZE CONTEST, PROSE WORKSHOP, ETC.

The American Prison association is offering again the (4th annual) G. Howland Shaw Essay Contest prizes of \$35, \$25, \$20, \$15, \$10 & \$5, for mas. of any type under 2,500 words, written by inmates of penal institutions. A very worthy type of rehabilitation project. We gladly give it this small amount of publicity. Closes: Oct. 31, 1952. MSS. to go to the educational officers at each prison.

Fiction Workshop. No. 13. A Flashback Competition, Give the last few lines of your narrative, then fade back into the "secondary present". Show how you would start a flashback. Fewest possible words. Closes: Oct. 10.

No. 14. Start a Scene. Make it so "memorable" we will want to read on. And make it brief! Closes: Dec. 10.

DO YOU NEED ENVELOPES?

We still have plenty of a few sizes:

20 Each (One Fold) \$1.00. Postage extra on
(6½ x 9½ & 7 x 10) all orders.

25 10 x 13 (Flat) \$1.00. Best quality.

Send 50¢ for postage for average small order. We will "make change" in additional envelopes. We're closing out our stock.

More B. A. Column Items:

Helen Langworthy

Articles: C.S. MONITOR, CATH. HOME MESSENGER, Detroit FREE PRESS.

Short Short: PRECIOUS BLOOD MESSENGER.

Helen Swift

Article: LIFE TODAY.

Send in your notes. We want to see them.

tion is better than just "types". There is evidence of some thought being expended upon the working out of the story and the situation. Very often I can see ways that they could have been deepened. But I have a respect for the better examples of this type of fiction, which is sometimes looked down upon as merely "drugstore" fiction. I believe that if more novelists served an apprenticeship in this field, there would be more and better novels that sold well in the expensive bracket of hard cover fiction. I recommend young writers study these books for the practical patterns, construction and general reader appeal features. Most of the books I have been reading have happened to be Acadie House brand; there are other "popular" lines. Indeed, some of the regular publishers issue them side by side with their more costly items. It might be a way for a young novelist to break in or earn a stake, without being ashamed of himself later. It's certainly a better bet than gnashing one's teeth and trying to write Confessions that he considers "garbage". This field offers you the opportunity to write about the people & the places you know about, and like. I've been continually pleased at the unusual locales, the off-trail characters I have found among these books.

REWRITE

CAN YOU SUCCESSFULLY "IMITATE"

Many writers have difficulty getting started. Have you ever stopped to think that one good way is to imitate? Recently, I was talking with a writer and I said I believed every new market I had ever hit was one where I started out to imitate the product I discovered they were selling. This is just another way of phrasing the old thought about a writer reading a magazine or newspaper, & suddenly exclaiming, "Why I could have done that piece!"

By imitation I don't mean slavishly copying the actual contents or trying to do the same identical pieces over again. That only holds a mirror up to nature; and if you are like many inexperienced writers, your image will not be a very accurate imitation of the original, because most persons do not really see what is in front of them. They only see what they think they see; the image is rooted in their own minds, desires, etc. Wish-fulfillment stuff.

No, the first step in copying is to really observe what is actually in front of you. Any drawing teacher will tell you he has to first teach a new student to draw what he sees, not what he thinks he sees. Bliss Perry, distinguished English professor at Harvard at one time would place a vase, with a single flower in it, before his class. The students would have to try to capture an accurate and emotionally faithful "imitation" or what they saw. You all recall the story about the faithful Japanese, a tailor, who reproduced the customer's raincoat, even to the little patch where the old one was torn. And was it not Stevenson, who claimed he had learned to write by studying the great masters until he was able to reproduce their masterpieces sight unseen?

The second step, therefore, is to be able to use that power to observe with objective accuracy, to create your novel effects within the limitations you've found in the magazines you have studied and thoroughly analyzed. The really good impersonator is the man or woman who can catch all of the mannerisms of his subject, and then contribute something of his own. Good impersonators never slavishly imitate. They suggest and comment with a fresh vigor that is their own on a familiar theme. I reported a great lecture once and my published piece did not contain one direct quote, although it had a great many quotations in it of what the professor said. Afterwards, he wrote me a letter of commendation for the accuracy of the reporting! I had caught the spirit of his ideas and clothed them in the warmth of emotional and sympathetic enthusiasm, that yet gave the feeling of detachment and impartial reporting.

If you want to hit a new editor, you must have the willingness and painstaking audacity to analyze his book and his mind. The general pattern of his publication month after month and of the way he thinks in putting it together must be so clear to you you can use it as the basis for writing new material in the same general manner.

Whenever I try to hit a new magazine or a newspaper, I "case" old copies of the periodical until I have the "feel" of it. This includes studying the ads. and the illustrations. The NEW YORKER, HARPER'S BAZAAR, and MADAMEOISELLE represent smartness and sophistication, yet one only needs to glance at a copy or two to observe the differences. I'd be willing to gamble you could get the feel just from the pictorial material. You would not need to read the words.

Very few writers today, especially those, who blithely think they are ready for slick writing, are willing to study, really study, the magazines for this indefinable but very tangible quality of tone and pattern. I've had writers tell me they have read a certain magazine for years. But when I start saying that a story to be suitable for this publication must preferably be so long, be about certain kinds of people, etc., etc., look of surprise and bewilderment comes into the eyes. They just have never noticed that this magazine is put together in this way.

Literary Ambassadors

A half-million pocket-sized, paper-back books have been shipped to India as an experiment to give that country's 6,500,000 English-speaking population a well-rounded, vivid picture of American life. More than 100 selected titles will be distributed to each of 4,500 U.S. Information Service libraries for lending without red tape. Said the International Information Administration of the Department:

If this experiment with pocket libraries proves successful in India, other countries throughout the world may be sent similar libraries so that English-reading peoples everywhere can learn through these low-cost books the truth about the United States and its people.

Foreign Policy Briefs—

Dept. of State

done what he could with the problem. But he had failed to study the original author and to put himself within her emotional feeling. Therefore, he had missed his target. He had not caught the spirit of the play.

Do not dismiss what I am trying to say by the snap-phrase, "slant". That isn't it, not at all. Connie Smith, when she was the editor of fiction at MCCALL'S, used to say that one of the types of story they shot back the fastest were weak imitations that were slanted at what the author thought was the formula used at MCCALL'S. In other words, you're really selling your personality and strength of thought and emotion tailored to fit each editor's special need. That's why putting a ms. in a fresh envelop and sending it out to a long list of editors is apt to be foolish.